



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

*United States Attorney Donald W. Washington
Western District of Louisiana*

United States Courthouse • 300 Fannin Street, Suite 3201 • Shreveport, Louisiana 71101-3068 • (318) 676-3600
United States Courthouse • 800 Lafayette Street, Suite 2200 • Lafayette, Louisiana 70501-7206 • (337) 262-6618

For Immediate Release
May 3, 2006

Contact: Donald W. Washington (337-262-6618)
William J. Flanagan (318-676-3600)

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/law>

MAN WHO DEFRAUDED CATHOLIC NUNS GETS 25 YEARS

Now destined for federal prison

Shreveport, Louisiana . . . A Haughton, Louisiana man charged with defrauding an order of Catholic nuns and another individual out of more than \$4 million, was sentenced today in U.S. District Court, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced. **WOODROW HAYES**, age 52, was sentenced by United States District Judge S. Maurice Hicks, Jr. to spend **25 years in prison** on conspiracy and wire fraud charges. HAYES was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$4,460,744.42.

HAYES was indicted in May 2005 for conspiracy, wire fraud and money laundering arising out of a scheme to defraud the Congregation of the Daughters of the Cross, an order of elderly Catholic nuns located in Shreveport, Louisiana, which stretched from December 2003 to November 2004. HAYES, portraying himself as a man in dire straits, continuously asked for money from the nuns for past due mortgage payments on his home and for legal costs associated with a lawsuit filed against him by a contractor. HAYES promised to repay the Daughters of the Cross with interest. However, HAYES spent the money to satisfy his own lavish lifestyle, including gambling at local

casinos, the purchase of homes, numerous vehicles and other assets. Over the course of the scheme, HAYES defrauded the Daughters of the Cross out of more than \$3.6 million. The Daughters of the Cross have been in Shreveport for more than a century and operated St. Vincent's Academy High School in Shreveport until it closed in 1988.

After the first indictment against HAYES became public, a Shreveport resident contacted law enforcement authorities and provided additional information regarding HAYES. A subsequent investigation resulted in a superseding indictment in June which charged that between October 8, 2001 and February 22, 2005 on 222 separate occasions, this individual gave HAYES cash and checks amounting to \$689,105. HAYES lied to this individual saying he needed money because his home had been destroyed by fire, and subsequently that he needed to make good on fraudulent checks written by someone who had stolen his checkbook; in reality HAYES used the money to satisfy his own wants and needs.

HAYES pleaded guilty in November 2005 to conspiracy and wire fraud.

After the arrest of HAYES, the government seized 12 vehicles which were purchased by HAYES with proceeds from this conspiracy. The vehicles seized were:

- 2001 Chevrolet Suburban;
- 2002 Chevrolet Avalanches (2);
- 2004 Chevrolet Avalanches (4);
- 2004 Cadillac Escalade;
- 2005 Jaguar XJ8;
- 1997 GMC dump truck;
- 1999 GMC dump truck; and
- 1999 Chevrolet dump truck.

These vehicles were sold and the proceeds totalling \$264,082 were forfeited to the government. HAYES was also ordered to forfeit \$3,688,068 in United States currency, as well as the following property:

- 2902 Loriwood, Haughton, Louisiana;
- 1008 Clarence Street, Bossier City, Louisiana; and
- Lot 8, River Chase Subdivision, Bossier Parish, Louisiana.

U.S. Attorney Washington stated: “Hayes preyed on the benevolence of an order of nuns who are obliged to help those in their hours of greatest need. He stole their money and his dark soul has caused him to forfeit 25 years of his life. We are grateful to the Caddo Parish Sheriff’s Office and the FBI for bringing this depraved soul to justice.”

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission are only used as guidelines by the judge in determining the appropriate sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was investigated by the Caddo Parish Sheriff’s Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Shreveport Resident Agency, and was prosecuted by First Assistant U.S. Attorney William J. Flanagan and Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexander C. Van Hook.

#